



IOWA'S FISHING ATLAS

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Start planning your spring fishing trips today!

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 15.](#)

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

- [NORTHWEST](#)
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Spring Urban Trout Stockings start March 23

Experience the thrill of catching a trout this spring at one of our urban trout lakes. Share the fun - invite a kid, your best friend or the whole family to come along.

[Spring Urban Trout Stocking Schedule](#)

NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

Town Bay is open. Any remaining ice on the lake is unsafe for travel. More reports will be available as open water fishing begins.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

Any remaining ice is unsafe for travel. More reports will be available as we receive

them.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Any remaining ice is unsafe for travel. Immediately after ice out is a good time to target channel catfish along shore using cut bait.

As of March 15th, most lakes in western Iowa are partially ice covered. Remaining ice is unsuitable for ice fishing. More reports will be available as more anglers get out on open water. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 16-19 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Try near the Baptist camp in the main lake and by the channel in the little lake. Use light tackle and be mobile to stay on fish. The best bite is still at early morning and late afternoon. **Walleye** – Fair: Try jigging spoons and minnow heads. The best bite is still at early morning and the last hour of light.

Crystal Lake

Ice thickness is 14-17 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Use a small jig tipped with spikes or a minnow head near the edge of the dredge cut. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small jig tipped with spikes near the edge of the dredge cut.

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 15-18 inches. Avoid areas near the aerators. Vehicle traffic is not recommended. **Walleye** - Slow. **Yellow Perch** - Slow.

For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Yellow bass action continues; best with jigs tipped with wigglers. Fish traditional sites and move often to find active fish.

Five Island Lake

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers have had good pole bending activity with numbers of fish harvested. **Yellow Bass** - Good: Action has picked up, good numbers of fish have been harvested; fish the dredge cuts for the best action. **Black Crappie** - Good: Incidental catches by yellow bass anglers reflect bonus numbers in the creel.

Ingham Lake

Use caution; thin ice conditions around the aeration system.

Lost Island Lake

Yellow Bass - Good: Good numbers of fish are being caught, but sorting is needed; fish the Stoney Point area for the best action. **Walleye** - Fair: Numbers of fish are reported from Lost Island Lake; change tactics with the changing weather conditions. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Some yellow perch and black crappie are being caught by anglers fishing for yellow bass.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Use caution; thin ice conditions around the aeration system.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto)

Walleye - Fair: Ice anglers report catching walleye; best bite is during late day. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Fishing action has been very variable; ice anglers are catching nice size perch.

Spirit Lake

Limited access to the lake. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Reports of yellow perch action on the south east end of the lake. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Report of crappie and bluegill from the Templar Park area.

Trumbull Lake

Yellow Perch - Good: Persistent and patient anglers will be rewarded with good numbers of yellow perch 12 inches and larger in the creel.

West Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Good: Bluegills continue to be fussy; persistence and patience will be rewarded with good numbers of fish caught. **Northern Pike** - Good: Tip-up action will improve in the next few weeks with large fish common in the catch. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Report of yellow perch being caught from the deep water areas and some fish reported from the north end. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Report of crappie and bluegill activity by the Harbor.

For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice conditions in the impoundments are unsafe, especially with fluctuating water levels. Water clarity is improving. Open water fishing is around the corner. **Walleye** - Fair: Use a worm hooked in a worm harness fished below the dams. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Anglers fishing below dams are catching catfish using a big hook loaded with nightcrawlers.

Decorah District Streams

Snow melt is occurring. Better water clarity in the morning, turning off color by afternoon. With a slower bite, use bigger flashier flies and lures. Gravel roads and parking areas are getting rough and mushy as the frost comes out. **Brook**

Trout- Good: Midges hatch all season. Try wholly buggers or a flashy fly for a hungry brookie. **Brown Trout** - Good: Brown Trout are aggressive with melt water or run-off

inputs. Increasing numbers of insects are hatching on sunny afternoons. Use small midge or caddis patterns. With off color water, try a flashy spinner or fly. **Rainbow**

Trout- Good: Drift a feathered spinner, crankbait or a hook tipped with worm along an undercut bank.

Lake Hendricks

Few anglers are out. Ice conditions are deteriorating fast. Open water around the aerator. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the ice. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Move around to find fish. Use a small jig tipped with a minnow head. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with waxworms or spikes around structure.

Lake Meyer

Use caution when going on ice. Conditions will deteriorate fast with warming temperatures and longer daylight. Water clarity is improving. Early morning bite is best. Few anglers have been out. **Bluegill** - Slow: Use small jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Key in to brush and dangle a small jig about a foot or two above the stems.

Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Upper Iowa is mostly ice-free. Anglers are finding fish below the dams. **Walleye** - Fair: Use jigs with twister tails and crankbaits. **White Sucker** - Fair: Anglers reporting suckers are starting to hit.

Volga Lake

Culverts were placed on the ice for habitat; avoid this area. Ice conditions will change fast with longer warmer days. Use extreme caution. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Drop your lure about 3 feet above structure and watch them swim up to the bait. Use small teardrop shaped jigs tipped with spikes or waxworms. **Bluegill** - Slow: Fish around structure in 14-16 feet water about a foot off the bottom.

Temperatures warm to mid-40s through the weekend. Possibility of rain/snow Friday night. River and stream clarity are improving. Most lakes have ice, but generally not safe to walk on. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Reports of a few walleye being caught on the Cedar River in Black Hawk and Bremer Counties. **Walleye** – Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Manchester District Streams

Trout Streams are in excellent condition. Use streamers, jigs, and crankbaits. With spring like temperatures, there have been good afternoon hatches. **Brown Trout** - Good: Browns can be easier to catch on days where the water color is stained. **Rainbow Trout**– Slow. **Brook Trout** – Slow.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

There have been a few reports of anglers catching walleye on the Maquoketa River; river levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

There have been a few reports of anglers catching walleye on the Shell Rock River; river levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

There have been no reports on the Shell Rock River, but levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - No Report: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Eastern Iowa rivers are open; open water angling opportunities are available on the Cedar, Shell Rock, Wapsipinicon and Maquoketa. Put the ice fishing gear away and prepare for the spring walleye run! Area trout streams are in excellent condition. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing is fairly stable at around 8.1 feet. Main channel ice has broken up and the ice flows have moved through. Ice conditions are variable with very few areas having safe access. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the bite to pick up as water temperatures rise. Use crankbaits fished on a 3-way rig or jigs with minnows. **Yellow Perch**- Good: Early spring should be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - Fair: Use jig and minnows fished off the bottom in the tailwater areas.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville is 14.2 feet. Main channel ice has broken up and the ice flows have moved through. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the bite to pick up as water temperatures rise. Use crankbaits fished on a 3-way rig or jigs with minnows. **Yellow**

Perch- Excellent: Early spring can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - Fair: Some fish are in the tail-waters. Expect the bite to pick up with warmer water temperatures this week.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River levels at Guttenberg are 5.9 feet. Main channel ice has broken up and the ice flows have moved through. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the bite to pick up as water temperatures rise. Use crankbaits fished on a 3-way rig or jigs with minnows. **Yellow**

Perch - Excellent: Early spring can be a good time for perch fishing with some of the larger fish being caught this time of year. **Sauger** - Slow: Some fish are in the tail-waters. Expect the bite to pick up with warmer water temperatures this week.

Upper Mississippi River levels have fallen this week with main channel areas mostly free of ice flows with water temperatures still in the mid to upper 30's. Water clarity has improved. Ice fishing is not recommended due to unsafe ice.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels are stabilizing at 5.6 feet at the Dubuque Lock and the RR bridge is 7.9 feet. This is down a bit from last week. A slight rise in water levels may occur this upcoming week, but it will be fairly stable. **Yellow Perch** - Slow: A few scattered reports; no big catches yet, but some might be on these elusive fish. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some northern pike are being picked up occasionally by tailwater anglers. Some of the melted backwaters also may see some pike angling. **Walleye** - Fair: Some scattered reports of walleyes being taken in the tailwaters and more along wing dams. Fishing is fair to poor, but could improve with better weather conditions. Some nice slot fish are being reported.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water levels at Bellevue are 5.8 feet and are stable. This down over a bit from last week. Both Bellevue City ramp and the DNR ramp are open, but but no courtesy dock yet at the DNR ramp. Paddlefish season is now underway. Please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). **Yellow Perch** - Slow: Reports of a few scattered catches of yellow perch. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Some paddlefish were caught early; fishing has slowed a bit, but pods of Paddlefish could return to the tailwater. **Sauger** - Fair: Hit or miss. Some good reports of few, but nice sauger. Other reports of people really struggling. **Walleye** - Fair: Fairly slow fishing, but some nice slot fish are being picked up. **Northern Pike** - Slow: Tailwater anglers report catching a few northern pike. They will be preparing to spawn soon.

Mississippi River Pool 14

Water levels are falling and are 5.8 feet at Fulton, 10.1 feet at Camanche and 4.9 feet at LeClaire. This down over a foot from last week. Paddlefish season season is underway; please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). Ramps are open and ready for use. **Paddlefish** - Fair: Good fishing seen early in the season; it has slowed greatly, but some fish are still present. **Sauger** - Fair: Anglers report sauger fishing as scattered, but it could get decent if water levels stabilize. **Walleye** - Fair: Not many being caught, but reports of some very nice sized fish.

Mississippi River Pool 15

Water levels are falling and are 6.6 feet at Rock Island. This is down from last week; conditions should be very favorable for angling this week. **Sauger** - Fair: Fish are scattered, but some are being reported on jigs and minnow.

The River levels have dropped throughout the district. Tailwaters are all open for boat launching and floating ice has disappeared. Most backwaters are now open water, especially in Pool 13 through 15. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

Mississippi River Pool 16

Tailwater stage is 6.38 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and has been fairly steady the past few days. Marquette St boat ramp is open. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. **Sauger** - Slow: Reports of a few saugers being caught in Sylvan Slough. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 17

Tailwater stage is 5.18 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is falling. We have not received any reports on tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers. **Sauger** - No Report: Try fishing below the dam with jigs and minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 18

Tailwater stage is 6.42 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is falling. We have not received any tailwater fishing information for walleye and saugers this week. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits or minnows.

Mississippi River Pool 19

Tailwater stage is 3.72 feet at Lock and Dam 18 above Burlington and is falling. We have not received any tailwater fishing reports for walleyes and saugers. **Sauger** - No Report: Look for saugers below the dam. Try vertical jigging with minnows or trolling three-way rigs with stick baits.

River stages have been slowly falling. Main channel water temperature is around 40 degrees. We have not received many reports on tailwater fishing for walleye and saugers this week. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Environmental Discovery Park North Pond

The spring trout release will be at 10 a.m. next Friday (March 23). 1000 trout will be released.

Lake Belva Deer

Not much angler activity. Only a couple of boats were out on the lake last weekend. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few bass are being caught in deeper water out among the flooded trees.

Lake Darling

Just a few boats are getting out on the nicer days. Water temperature is in the mid 30's. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few small bass are being caught.

Lake Geode

Drained for renovation work scheduled for later this year. With the warmer weather, the bottom of the lake will thaw out and get soft again; use caution when walking around on the bottom of the lake.

Lake of the Hills

The Spring trout release is next Friday (March 23) at 10:30 a.m. 2000 trout will be released.

Skunk River (Rose Hill to Coppock)

Saw one boat out this weekend. Water level is a little low for this time of the year.

Wilson Lake

The spring trout release will be next Friday (March 23rd) at noon. 1000 will be released.

For more information on the fishing at the above lakes and rivers, contact the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

Lake Miami

The lake is ice free.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Lake Sugema and Tug Forks are completely free of ice.

[Lake Wapello](#)

The lake is free of ice. Use cut bait on the windblown shorelines to catch channel catfish this time of year.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South](#)

Trout are scheduled to be stocked on Saturday, March 24th at 11 a.m.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 903.45 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body. The campgrounds are closed. The lake is ice free. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use shad sides or cut bait on the windblown shorelines.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

The lake is ice free.

The lakes across the district all have open water. The district includes Mahaska, Lucas, Wayne, Monroe, Appanoose, Wapello, Davis and Van Buren counties. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail or tube jigs and live minnows or waxworms under a bobber.

[Big Creek Lake](#)

As of Wednesday, March 14, Big Creek was open water, except for an area in the narrow portion of the lake south of the Williams Drive Boat ramp.

[Des Moines River \(Saylorville to Red Rock\)](#)

Walleye - Fair: Lower river water levels make it a good time to start fishing below the Saylorville and downtown dams. Jigs tipped with twister tails and/or minnows work best.

[Saylorville Reservoir](#)

Channel Catfish - Fair: A good catfishing opportunity may occur as the ice continues to recede at Saylorville and release dead gizzard shad frozen in the ice. Fish dead shad under a bobber or on the bottom from the shoreline the wind is blowing into.

As of March 14, lakes in Central Iowa are mostly ice free with the exception of Saylorville Reservoir. For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.

Farm Creek Lake

Farm Creek Lake will offer good early spring crappie fishing in the upper end as water temperatures warm.

Lake Anita

As water temperatures warm, crappies will move into the pontoon area of the lake.

Lake Manawa

Warm sunny days offer good crappie fishing in the canals.

Meadow Lake

Meadow has a good population of 10 inch black crappie.

Viking Lake

Find early spring crappies in the campground arm and behind the pontoon area. Black

Lakes in the southwest district are ice free. Fishing reports will resume once open water angling begins. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.